

# James Thacher and His Influence On American Medicine



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Three years from now you will have the honor of celebrating the centenary of the birth of Walter Reed for whom this lecture is fittingly named. He is a towering figure in American medicine, an Army officer not dulled by the drab routine but ever to carry the spark of genius, so fully discerned by the far-seeing Welch in those early historic days at the Hopkins. That same spark was to burst forth in brilliant display many years later in the far-off Havana and mark an epoch in the frequently turbulent flow of the advancement of medical knowledge. Son of an obscure man of God, born in humble circumstances in Belroi, Reed became Virginia's most distinguished physician. When opportunity knocked, he, like Oliver Wendell Holmes, had 'the mind prepared,' even as Banting, Minot, Fleming, Florey and Trueta in our day. The door to medical education must be broad not to screen out 'the most distinguished' and Egyptian walls be no barrier to those qualified to enter. The Reeds of medicine are among us today and for them, often indistinguishable in the mass, our efforts must be bent. A Welch may get an inkling of future brightness, as he did with Reed, but most of us must be content with flag at mast and giving our best to those we are privileged to teach.

James Thacher, although he did not reach the heights scaled by Walter Reed, made for his time a notable contribution to medical education as a teacher of many boys in his home, an author of the first American textbook of medicine and an historian who collected for posterity the records of the lives of our medical worthies. In addition, Thacher wrote, according to John Adams, "the most natural, simple, and faithful narration of facts that I have seen in any history of that period [the American Revolutionary War]." Adams was writing in 1824, over forty years after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown but, after reading Thacher's *Military Journal* today, we would not disagree with Adams' opinion.

Besides his *Practice*, *Military Journal* and Medi-

*cal Biography*, Thacher wrote six other books, many of them produced at a time when ill health forced him to relinquish partly his extensive practice and embark upon antiquarian and historical endeavors. Some of these books rest in the oblivion of time, only of interest to the keen-nosed collector of 'peripheral medicine' or to the dusty librarian, worthily holding in her charge every bit of matter surrounding our predecessors so that years later someone like myself will force her to reach into her capacious pocket, dark and gloomy though it be, and bring forth a little known volume, a 'rare item,' a long-lost edition, perhaps only to 'lay a ghost.' Thacher would have approved of your Academy and library, as he did of the Boston Medical Library, a sprawling infant in his day but not unmindful, as you are, of its duty to those who had passed that way before.

## A MILITARY JOURNAL

While serving as a surgeon in the American Revolutionary War from 1775 to 1783, James Thacher kept a detailed diary, a day-by-day account, enlivened with intimate biographical sketches of officers in the field. A good picture of the spirit of Washington's Army, especially under the adverse circumstances of hunger, fatigue and cold, the journal also provides detailed descriptions of events almost unequalled by any of his contemporaries. He was a keen observer of the habits of his fellow-soldiers and, for a young country boy untrained in narration, his *Journal* must be considered a remarkable historical document.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, Thacher failed to give many details of his hospital experiences, except in regard to a smallpox inoculation, which he carried out on a large scale.

Thacher, a young man of twenty-one, fresh from an apprenticeship with Abner Hersey, the leading physician in Barnstable, Massachusetts, where the young Whig was born, became a surgeon's mate under John Warren in the provincial hospital at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in July, 1775. Warren, the brother of Joseph Warren, killed on June 17 at Bunker Hill, although only a year older than Thacher, was the senior surgeon to the hospital.

\*The Walter Reed Lecture delivered before the Richmond Academy of Medicine, February 10, 1948.

Thacher's account of his medical examination is perhaps not without interest even today. "On the appointed day," he wrote, "the medical candidates, sixteen in number, were summoned before the board for examination. This business occupied about four hours; the subjects were anatomy, physiology, surgery and medicine. It was not long after, that I was happily relieved from suspense, by receiving the sanction and acceptance of the board, with some acceptable instructions relative to the faithful dis-

after some hesitation he replied, 'I would have him examined by a medical committee'."<sup>2</sup>

Within a few days he got his first glimpse of George Washington and wrote, "It was not difficult to distinguish him from all others; his personal appearance is truly noble and majestic, being tall and well proportioned. His dress is a blue coat with buff colored facings, a rich epaulette on each shoulder, buff under dress, and an elegant small sword; a black cockade in his hat."



Fig. 1—James Thacher and Susannah Hayward about the time of their marriage in 1785.  
(From pastel portraits in the possession of Thacher's great-granddaughter, Miss Mary Russell Hodge of Plymouth.)

charge of duty, and the humane treatment of those soldiers who may have the misfortune to require my assistance. Six of our number were privately rejected as being found unqualified. The examination was in a considerable degree close and severe, which occasioned not a little agitation in our ranks. But it was on another occasion, as I am told, that a candidate under examination was agitated into a state of perspiration, and being required to describe the mode of treatment in rheumatism, among other remedies he would promote a sweat, and being asked how he would effect this with his patient,

Thacher was soon busy, however, tending to the wounded from Bunker Hill but not too busy to note that "paper bills now circulate instead of species," or the arrival of troops from Pennsylvania and Maryland, "remarkable for the accuracy of their aim." In October he described the quick trial and conviction of Benjamin Church, the Surgeon General, for traitorous correspondence with the enemy in Boston. By November the hospitals were crowded with sick soldiers from camp—"autumnal fevers and dysenteric complaints, which have proved fatal in a considerable number of instances."

By January, 1776, the Army was reduced to a very critical situation, being obliged to substitute new troops and militia in place of those who had been in service five or six months, and this exchange was made within musket shot of the enemy's lines. During part of this period Thacher wrote, "our numbers were not sufficient to man the lines, nor was there powder enough in camp to furnish four rounds a man." The troops captured some cannon from the army in Boston but these were old and many of them unserviceable; and Thacher felt that, "had the enemy been acquainted with our situation, the consequences might have been exceedingly distressing." In February, 1776, John Morgan of Philadelphia was appointed Director General of the hospitals, replacing Church. After Morgan arrived in Cambridge a new and systematic arrangement of the medical departments took place. Thacher was subjected to another examination by Morgan and received from him the appointment of physician's mate to David Townsend in the regiment commanded by Colonel Asa Whitcomb stationed in the barracks on Prospect Hill. Young Thacher was glad to exchange his hospital job for that of a regimental surgeon, particularly under the command of such an outstanding figure as Whitcomb, with his friend Townsend, a survivor of Bunker Hill and a former pupil of Joseph Warren, as the regimental surgeon. The regiment was soon ordered to march to Roxbury, where they occupied the house formerly belonging to Governor Shirley, and all the troops were alerted for a general attack on the heights at Dorchester which occurred in March of 1776. Thacher describes the assault in some detail and noted that Washington was present, "animating and encouraging the soldiers and they, in return, manifested their joy." On March a flag of truce came out from Boston acquainting Washington that General Howe had come to the determination to evacuate the town, and the fleet with the evacuating troops sailed on March 17. The larger part of the army under Washington was then ordered to New York, but those that remained, including Thacher, entered Boston on the 20th. Thacher wrote, "while marching through the streets, the inhabitants appeared at their doors and windows; though they manifested a lively joy on being liberated from a long imprisonment, they were not altogether free from a melancholy gloom which ten tedious months' seige had spread over their countenances. The streets

and buildings presented a scene, which reflects disgrace on their late occupants, exhibiting a deplorable desolation and wretchedness." Townsend, the regimental surgeon, found his parents and sister in Boston, and young Thacher took up his abode in their house. He mentions the Old South Church and notes that the inside was entirely destroyed by the British, "the sacred building occupied as a riding school for Burgoyne's regiment of dragoons." The North Church had been entirely demolished and consumed for fuel.

Always a physician, Thacher was delighted to record that one of his soldiers found in Boston a human skeleton in complete preparation, left by a British surgeon, "which I received as an acceptable present." On July 3 orders were given for an inoculation for the smallpox of all soldiers and inhabitants of the town, as a general infection of this disease was apprehended. Townsend and young Thacher were constantly engaged in this work. By August 5 his entire regiment, consisting of 500 men, had gone through the smallpox by inoculation, and all except one Negro recovered. This, of course, was direct inoculation with smallpox matter before the discovery of vaccination with cow-pox by Jenner, the same method that had proved so valuable in the hands of Zabdiel Boylston in 1721 in Boston.

After the inoculations were finished the regiment prepared to march from Boston to Ticonderoga and, on August 7, they marched out of town with colors displayed and drums beating. Thacher was somewhat indisposed and he was permitted to remain in town to take charge of the sick soldiers until he recovered his health. This he did on August 20, when he said good-bye to the town of Boston, where he had resided very pleasantly for five months. "I am destined," he wrote, "to a distant part of our country, and know not what sufferings and hazards I shall be called to encounter while in the discharge of my military duties."

He commenced his journey in company with another officer and fourteen men. His route led through Worcester, Springfield, and over the Green Mountains to Skeensbury,<sup>3</sup> the place of rendezvous for the Continental troops and militia destined for Ticonderoga. Here they embarked upon a boat to cross Lake Champlain.

Soon after arriving in Ticonderoga one of the soldiers was bitten in the hand by a rattlesnake.

Thacher describes the incident and the treatment that was used. In a half-hour the whole arm and shoulder was swollen to twice its normal size and the skin had become a deep orange color. Soon half the body became swollen in a similar manner and nausea had set in. The man's condition was critical. Thacher and two other physicians procured a quantity of olive oil and requested the patient to swallow it in large and repeated doses until he had swallowed a quart. At the same time there was rubbed into the affected limb a large quantity of mercurial ointment. In about two hours the patient began to recover, and in forty-eight hours he was well.

Thacher describes in considerable detail the formation and character of the army. Calculating that services of an army would be required for a short period of time only, most of the troops in the field in the summer of 1776 were minutemen, volunteers, and militia, and it was a considerable time before they were regularly organized into regiments and brigades. In many instances the soldiers were indulged the privilege of choosing their own officers, and these officers too frequently proved unqualified to discharge their military duties. Because of the short terms of service there was a continual fluctuation of men from camp to farms. There was also trouble in connection with the troops from the southern states being incorporated and associated in military duty with those from New England. Many of the officers from the South were gentlemen of education and unaccustomed to that equality which prevailed in New England and, as Thacher justly remarks that, "however desirable it could scarcely be expected that people from distant colonies, differing in manners and prejudices, could at once harmonize in free intercourse. Hence we too frequently hear the burlesque epithet of Yankee from one party, and Buckskin, by way of retort, from the other."

To encourage enlistments each soldier was to receive a bounty of \$20 and 100 acres of land if he served during the war. The monthly pay ranged from \$75 for a full colonel to \$6.67 for a private. Each commissioned officer was allowed the privilege of taking a soldier from the ranks for a waiter, and he was exempt from camp and other duties except in time of action.

The autumn of 1776 passed pleasantly enough in Ticonderoga. Thacher learned of Bushnell's ex-

periments with the torpedo, although he did not actually witness its use. News of a serious character, however, soon came to the fort when, on October 15, it was learned that the fleet of vessels on Lake Champlain had been destroyed and that the British Army was established at Crown Point, a prominent peninsula on the western shores of the Lake, a few miles to the north of Fort Ticonderoga. It was expected that the British would attempt to capture the fort at Ticonderoga but, much to everyone's apparent surprise, when a small force of troops reconnoitered Crown Point about November 1, they found that the British had retired to Canada for the winter. The rest of the year was a fairly pleasant one, and certainly Thacher and his regiment were much better off than was General Washington and the Continental Army in New Jersey. No action, except for the raids of the hostile Indians, took place in Ticonderoga until after April in 1777. The Indian raids, however, were persistent and often severe, and many of the wounded were brought back to be under Thacher's care.

On April 1, 1777, Colonel Whitcomb, who was the commanding officer of Thacher's regiment, left the service, his term having expired. At this time Thacher applied to Jonathan Potts, the director general of his department, for transfer from the status of a regimental surgeon to that of a surgeon's mate in the general hospital. He was accepted, and his friend, David Townsend, was appointed senior surgeon at the same time. In the general hospital at Ticonderoga they found eighty soldiers with various diseases and eight or ten men who had been cruelly wounded by savages, some of them scalped.

Thacher seems to have had plenty of time on his hands for diversions. He speaks of exploring the country, and he went across Lake Champlain to Mount Independence, directly opposite Ticonderoga. A strong fort had been established on the summit of the mountain, and communications between the two places was maintained by a floating bridge and protected by a boom which was supposed to confine the British fleet north of this point. Thacher, who sometimes took a romantic view of life, describes the scene from the top of Mount Independence in some detail:

"From this commanding eminence we had one of the most singularly romantic views which imagination can paint. Northward we behold Lake Champlain, a prodigious expanse of unruffled water, widening and straighten-

ing as the banks and clifts project into its channel. This lake extends about one hundred miles toward Quebec, and is from one to five miles wide. On each side is a thick uninhabited wilderness, variegated by hills and dales; here the majestic oak, chestnut and pine, rear their lofty heads; there the diminutive shrub forms a thicket for the retreat of wild beasts. Looking southwest from our stand we have a view of part of Lake George, emptying its waters into Lake Champlain, near Ticonderoga. Turning to the east, the prodigious heights called Green Mountains, ascending almost to the clouds, are exhibited to view, with the settlements in that tract of territory called New Hampshire grant. The ancient fortress at Crown Point is about twelve miles north of this place; it is by nature a very strong position, but it has been abandoned by both armies."

Suddenly this quiet and romantic existence was interrupted. On the night of July 5, 1777, Thacher was rudely awakened with the astounding news that both Ticonderoga and Mount Independence had to be evacuated at once. He could scarcely believe the information, but immediately began to collect the sick and wounded and as much of the hospital stores as possible. The men and equipment were embarked on boats at the shore at three o'clock in the morning of July 6 and commenced the voyage down the South bay of Lake Champlain to their original rendezvous at Skeenesborough, a distance of about thirty miles. The little fleet was heavily laden with cannon, tents, provisions, invalids, and women, but Thacher was not averse to remarking on the beauty of the voyage and the pleasant scenery. He wrote, "The night was moon light and pleasant, the sun burst forth in the morning with uncommon lustre, the day was fine, the water's surface serene and unruffled. The shore on each side exhibited a variegated view of huge rocks, caverns, and clifts, and the whole was bounded by a thick, impenetrable wilderness. My pen would fail in the attempt to describe a scene so enchantingly sublime. The occasion was peculiarly interesting, and we could but look back with regret, and forward with apprehension. We availed ourselves, however, of the means of enlivening our spirits. The drum and fife afforded us a favorite music; among the hospital stores we found many dozen of choice wine, and we cheered our hearts with the nectareous contents."

The little gay band evacuating Ticonderoga felt reasonably safe, but they were far from being secure. Burgoyne was at their heels, and in less than two hours after landing the enemy attacked them

from the sea, having broken through the bridge and the boom at Ticonderoga, thought to be impenetrable. Shortly the British troops and Indians landed and rapidly advanced on the party. Nearly all stores and equipment were abandoned and the troops hastened southward, marching all night, with the Indians right behind them, to Fort Ann, about eight miles to the south, where they arrived at five o'clock on the morning of the 7th. They received a small reinforcement from Fort Edward, ten miles further to the south of them, and finally were able to repel the British after a capture of some of their prisoners. A British surgeon who was captured returned to Thacher some of his books and papers which had been taken out of his chest at Skeenesborough two days before.

Fort Ann being of no particular importance, the party marched to Fort Edward on the Hudson, two miles south of Hudson Falls. There they met the main army from Ticonderoga and Mount Independence who had marched south through lower New Hampshire. On the 25th of July young Thacher set up his tents and cared for the sick and wounded, but within a few days was ordered to move them by boat down the Hudson to Albany, a distance of a little over fifty miles. This took him three days, with his forty patients.

Albany was a town of about three hundred houses. The hospital, which had been erected during the French war, was situated above the town in a two-story building containing about forty wards capable of accommodating five hundred patients.

The army, in the meantime, had also evacuated Fort Edward and now established itself at Stillwater, nor far from Saratoga, where an important battle was shortly to be fought in the middle of September. By the 21st of the month Thacher's hospital was receiving the officers and soldiers wounded in the battle of Saratoga. Several, he states, had received very formidable and serious wounds and had to be subjected to capital operations.

In October one of his patients was General Arnold, whose leg had been badly fractured by a musket ball. Thacher noted that Arnold was "very peevish and impatient under his misfortunes and requires all my attention during the night, but I devoted an hour in writing a letter to a friend in Boston detailing the particulars of the late battle."

Burgoyne, in the meantime, had been captured,

with a number of ladies of high rank, and on the 21st of October arrived in Albany and was put up in the hospitable mansion of General Schuyler. The same kind of treatment was extended to the officers of lesser rank and even to the soldiers who were wounded and captured on the field of battle. On the 24th of October Thacher noted that the hospital was now crowded with patients. Hessians were given exactly the same accommodations as the Continental troops and received equal care and attention. In many cases, however, the foreign troops were under the care of their own surgeons. Thacher thought that the English surgeons performed with skill and dexterity but the Germans, with few exceptions, were no credit to their profession. Many of them seemed destitute of all sympathy and tenderness towards the patients under their care. The hospital was not only crowded, but over five hundred patients were cared for in the Dutch Church and in private homes, in addition to an equal number in the hospital. There were thirty surgeons and surgeon's mates on duty, and all were constantly employed.

Thacher devoted all his time from eight o'clock in the morning to late in the evening caring for his patients. He speaks of amputations, the trepanning of fractured skulls, and other formidable types of surgery and gives a vivid description of the patients and their sufferings such as only could be given by a thoughtful, considerate surgeon who had the best interests of his men at heart. Some details of the operations are given showing that Thacher was a bold and courageous surgeon as well as an acute observer, sorting out the strong from the weak, the courageous from the cowards.

In February of 1778 many of the wounded committed to his care in October of the previous year had recovered, and Jonathan Potts, the director general, presented young Thacher with a generous and handsome present, consisting of a furlough of forty days, to visit his home and friends in New England. He rode on horseback first to Boston and then to Barnstable, Cape Cod, where he was born. He tells us little about the journey itself except that he returned to duty in Albany two days before the expiration of his furlough, a conscientious young man indeed.

In the meantime, General Washington was having his worst winter at Valley Forge, and it was not until Spring that matters began to improve in

the Continental Army. Thacher gives a striking account, which he received from a friend, of the conditions at Valley Forge.

The Spring wore away without activity but on June 1, 1778, the hospital was moved from Albany to High Lands on the Hudson opposite what is now known as West Point. Patients, hospital stores, and baggage were moved by boat, a pleasant voyage down the Hudson. The hospital was quickly established in the house of Colonel Beverly Robinson, a Loyalist from New York who had used this mansion as his summer residence. Again, as things were quiet, Thacher had some time to explore the country. He climbed Sugar Loaf Mountain and various other high points near it and otherwise enjoyed himself. He visited other hospitals in the neighborhood such as the one at Fishkill, where he found some of his old friends, Adams and Eustis, from Boston. He seems to have made himself at ease with all the general officers in the camp and was formally introduced to Kosciuszko from Poland, who had recently arrived in the country and was employed in the engineering department with the rank of Colonel. In company with Gouverneur Morris and William Brown, the physician-general, he rode into the camp at White Plains. While waiting on Colonel Scammell, the adjutant general, Thacher requested a change from the office of hospital surgeon to that of a regimental surgeon, similar to the one he had occupied in the past when at Ticonderoga. Apparently he was anxious for more active service, having had little to do since his furlough the first of the year. Brown, however, prevailed upon him not to dissolve his connections at that time with the general hospital.

Thacher then went on a further trip, to Bradford and then on to Danbury, Connecticut. The trip was made by horseback and apparently it was a pleasant diversion. He returned on August 7 and found that many new cases had come in to the hospital, mostly of putrid fever and dysentery.

In September Thacher reported the arrival of Major General Israel Putnam with a division of troops from Maryland and one from Virginia. This is his first contact with soldiers from the South, but it became an intimate one, as Brigadier Generals Woodford and Muhlenburg took up their quarters in the hospital, along with General Putnam. Putnam, he noted, was "corpulent and clumsy, but carries a bold, undaunted front. He exhibits little of

the refinements of the well-educated gentleman, but much of the character of the veteran soldier."

Washington paid an unexpected visit to the hospital in October, and Thacher had the pleasure of showing him through the different wards. Washington showed great interest in the sick and wounded, and in general gave approbation to the way the hospital was conducted. Thacher's account of the personal appearance of Washington is one of the best on record and is worth quoting in detail. "The personal appearance of our Commander in Chief is that of the perfect gentleman and accomplished warrior. He is remarkably tall, full six feet, erect and well proportioned. The strength and proportion of his joints and muscles appear to be commensurate with the preeminent powers of his mind. The serenity of his countenance, and majestic gracefulness of his deportment, impart a strong impression of that dignity and grandeur which are his peculiar characteristics, and no one can stand in his presence without feeling the ascendancy of his mind, and associating with his countenance the idea of wisdom, philanthropy, magnanimity, and patriotism. There is a fine symmetry in the features of his face, indicative of a benign and dignified spirit. His nose is strait, and his eyes inclined to blue. He wears his hair in a becoming cue, and from his forehead it is turned back and powdered in a manner which adds to the military air of his appearance. He displays a native gravity, but devoid of all appearance of ostentation. His uniform dress is a blue coat, with two brilliant epaulettes, buff colored under clothes, and a three cornered hat, with a black cockade. He is constantly equipped with an elegant small sword, boots and spurs, in readiness to mount his noble charger. There is not in the present age, perhaps, another man so eminently qualified to discharge the arduous duties of the exalted station he is called to sustain, amidst difficulties which to others would appear insurmountable, nor could any man have more at command the veneration and regard of the officers and soldiers of our army, even after defeat and misfortune. This is the illustrious chief, whom a kind Providence has decreed as the instrument to conduct our country to peace and to Independence."

There was a good deal of entertainment by General Muhlenburg and others when Malachai Treat, the physician general, visited the hospital. Muh-

lenburg gave a dinner for forty-one officers, the tables being "furnished with fourteen different dishes, arranged in a fashionable style." General Putnam presided; many toasts were pronounced, accompanied by humorous and merry songs, and in the evening there was military music and dancing, which continued to a late hour in the night. General Muhlenburg, who had previously been a minister of a parish in Virginia, "participated in the spirit of the times, exchanging his clerical profession for that of a soldier." He had raised his own regiment of soldiers, and he was appointed their commander.

Thacher was greatly impressed by the boys from Virginia, and on the tenth of November, 1778, asked to be transferred to their regiment as a surgeon. This was accomplished, and he took up his quarters with Colonel George Gibson and the other officers. It is a little surprising that this relatively uneducated Cape Cod boy, puritanical in mind, should have been accepted as a surgeon by the fun-loving Virginia regiment. He must have had something in his character that appealed to the men from the Southern state, although he does not always seem to have been happy in their relaxed discipline and habits which, he thought, "almost approached dissipation." The officers from Virginia and Maryland adopted a practice of giving suppers alternately, with music and dancing through half the night, which caused Thacher to remark that "they do not accord precisely with many own views of time well spent, although I am frequently enticed to a participation in their banqueting revels."

Apparently Thacher had a capacity for making friends easily, for he speaks of dining with Captain Carter at West Point, visiting friends in Fishkill, and even waiting on the Marquis de la Fayette. He was received by the Marquis in a polite and affable manner. La Fayette had just recovered from a fever and was in his chair convalescing. Then only twenty-one years of age, he was described by Thacher as "not very elegant in his form, his shoulders being broad and high, nor is there a perfect symmetry in his features, his forehead is remarkably high, his nose large and long, eyebrows broad and projecting over a fine animated hazel eye. His countenance is interesting and impressive. He converses in broken English, and displays the manner and address of an accomplished gentleman." Thacher says that he was highly hon-

ored by this interview; his keen eye and power of description amply justify the meeting as recorded in his diary for November 27, 1778.

The Virginia regiment gave some gay parties over Christmas and New Years. After a long dinner and dancing, the officers gathered in General Muhlenburg's quarters at the hospital, where an elegant supper was provided. Not one of the company was permitted to retire until three o'clock in the morning. A number of ladies were present. "Thus," comments Thacher, "have the gallant Virginians commenced the new year."

The winter of 1779 was a mild one in Albany, although some of the soldiers suffered from exposure while living in canvas tents. By April the weather had become very pleasant, and young Thacher bought a handsome bay horse for six hundred dollars. This amount indicated the depreciation value of paper money, which he had received for pay; for the horse, he reports, could not be valued at much more than eighty dollars in silver. In the Spring the Virginia regiment and others were paraded before Baron Steuben, a marked disciplinarian with a scrutinizing eye. He took into his hands the muskets and accoutrements of each soldier, examining them with particular accuracy and precision. From Thacher, the surgeon, he required a list of the sick, with a particular statement of their accommodations and modes of treatment, and even visited some of the sick in their cabins. Steuben at the time was inspector-general with the rank of major general in the Army.

As summer approached, Thacher rode around the country on his horse, visiting various military installations and, apparently, always welcomed by the officer in charge. On the twentieth of June he was in West Point, and there he received a letter from his old friend, David Townsend, who had become surgeon to the military hospital at Providence, Rhode Island. He invited Thacher to accept the position of surgeon to the Massachusetts regiment under Colonel Henry Jackson, which was then in Providence. Thacher's chief reason for considering this new appointment appears to have been that the officers in the Massachusetts regiment received compensation in clothing and other articles which he could not claim while serving with the Virginia regiment. He felt that it was proper, moreover, that officers should serve in the line of their own state, and though he had enjoyed the most friendly inter-

course and numerous kind favors from the Virginians, he "preferred the manners and habits of the New Englanders." He therefore decided to join the Massachusetts regiment and left West Point on the second of July, arriving in Providence on the ninth. On the way his horse was seized with distemper, and he was forced to dispose of the animal. The journey took him through Litchfield, Farmington, Hartford, and across the Connecticut River to East Hartford. There he found the whole country in a state of alarm, as the enemy had landed in New Haven. He then passed through Windham and finally reached his old friend Townsend. Colonel Henry Jackson accepted him at once as a surgeon to the regiment, and he commenced his duties the day he arrived.

In August, 1779, the British had established a post on the Penobscot River in Maine, having approached there from Halifax. An expedition was planned to overcome this force, as the invasion of Maine had excited great indignation among the people. Colonel Jackson's regiment was added to the force, and they marched to Boston. The regiment consisted of four hundred men, completely uniformed and well-disciplined, and not inferior, according to Thacher, to any in the Continental Army. They completed the forced march from Providence to Boston, a distance of forty miles, in twenty-four hours. They were treated with great respect, and a dinner was given at the Bunch of Grapes tavern for the officers before they departed in transports. Even after the troops were on board, the officers returned to the Bunch of Grapes, where a liberal and elegant entertainment was provided. They sailed on a brig carrying eight guns, but had a convoy of the *Renown* of fourteen guns and put into Portsmouth Harbor, encamping at Kittery. In the meantime, General Lovell, in charge of the Penobscot expedition, had been forced to retire, for the British had been augmented by a large fleet which had arrived from New York. The Penobscot expedition ended disgracefully, with the troops scattered and their vessels abandoned. Thacher's regiment, which had not taken part, returned to Cambridge, where they encamped on the Common and then marched into Boston.

In September the regiment returned to Providence and almost immediately made ready to march into New Jersey. They crossed the Hudson at King's Ferry, and in December they camped at

Morristown. There was great suffering that year, for many of the troops were ill provided with clothing and shelter. In addition to the miserable canvas tents, the troops were greatly affected by a scarcity of provisions. The weather, too, was much worse than that of the year before. Thacher describes in great detail the sufferings of the soldiers. When enlistments ran out, men were only too glad to leave the Army and return home, and there was great difficulty in recruiting new men for the service.

With the coming of the Spring there arrived in camp the usual Congressional Committees for the purpose of investigating the circumstances and condition of the Army. Thacher was asked to present complaints and grievances to them, acting, apparently, as a natural leader. Conditions became somewhat better with the reappearance of Baron Steuben and the return of La Fayette from France, so that by June four battalions of troops could be paraded before the committee from Washington, in the presence of General Washington, and make a respectable showing. By July Thacher found the troops in excellent shape as far as their health was concerned, but there were many perplexing incidents of a disposition occasioned by absence from home, which he called "nostalgia." This was particularly so in the recruits from New England, who became dull and melancholy with loss of appetite, restless nights, and great weakness.

Great excitement was caused by the discovery of the treachery of General Arnold and the capture of Major John André of the British Army. Regiments were immediately sent to West Point, and there Thacher witnessed the execution of André in October, which he described in detail. He remained in West Point during the fall of 1780 and in January, 1781, he found himself in winter quarters with his brigade about two miles from West Point itself, a situation which he found singularly romantic, on a highly elevated spot surrounded by mountains and craggy rocks just above the banks of the Hudson, a position which afforded a splendid view of the country for many miles in all directions. There was no longer any reason to complain of his accommodations, for the huts were warm and comfortable. Wood was in abundance at the door, and there was a tolerable supply of provisions. His only real complaint at that time was the little value to the paper money which the troops received for their services.

After the turn of the year Thacher remained in Highlands and took part in a good many local skirmishes and had a few wounded to care for. At one time he went down the Hudson to Crompond, an advanced base twenty miles below West Point, and there took charge of a number of wounded. This advanced position was almost within the British lines, and he tells stories of the raiding that went on by irresponsible people taking advantage of the disturbed sector between the British and the Continental forces. The marauders took the name of "cowboys" and "skimmers" and apparently carried out the most atrocious deeds in an effort to terrorize the people. Some of the soldiers, as the result of these skirmishes, were so severely wounded that his friend Eustis was also called in to aid him. A side-light on the practice of medicine in 1781 is given in the history of a soldier who had received a dangerous wound through the shoulder and lungs, so that air escaped from the wound at every breath. He and Eustis dilated the wound and then Eustis decided that, as the patient had not sustained a copious loss of blood, repeated blood-letting was necessary. In spite of this drastic treatment the patient recovered. Eustis was a firm believer in blood-letting, and even when he became sick himself with a minor illness he requested Thacher to bleed him as the principal means of treatment.

By April Thacher had returned to Highlands, where he again inoculated all the troops against small pox. He reports that he had only four deaths out of five hundred men inoculated. Later in the month Thacher went by horseback to New Windsor to pay his respects to John Cochran, the new director general of hospitals, who had succeeded Shippen.

In June the troops began a march, crossing the Hudson and establishing themselves at Tarrytown. There Rochambeau met them, and the troops were reviewed in his presence by Washington. Thacher, with his usual facilities of making friends, soon became acquainted with the French officers, and they invited him to an elaborate dinner, which he describes in detail. On the seventeenth of July a new corps of light infantry, selected from several New England regiments, was formed under the command of Colonel Alexander Scammell. This was a picked group of men and officers who were to serve in advance of the main army and be con-

stantly prepared for active and hazardous service. Much to Thacher's pleasure he was asked to become the surgeon to Scammell's corps, thus indicating the high respect that the officers of the line had for this young doctor. He accepted at once and with Scammell's light infantry, in the autumn of 1781, he marched to Trenton and then to Philadelphia on the way to Yorktown. The main body of the army left Annapolis by boat, sailed down Chesapeake Bay into Hampton Roads and landed on September 22, about twelve miles from Yorktown. Within a week they had moved up to within a mile of the town. On the way he passed through Williamsburg and saw the public buildings and the college. Although the buildings were splendid the water, from the doctor's viewpoint, was "extremely brackish and disagreeable." Then Colonel Scammell was surprised and captured, but his corps continued in action. Violent battles, under the general command of Washington, with Steuben, La Fayette and Rochambeau as aides, were fought in October in the field. Thacher, too, had to fight against weakness and fever, which had attacked many of the troops from New England. He then witnessed the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and gave a detailed account of the celebrated event. Being a mounted officer he was able to move around and see almost everything that was happening, and he took advantage of this in describing what actually took place on the field.

The troops then returned to West Point, where they encamped again at Highlands and spent the winter. Thacher seems to have kept himself in excellent health, for he could only report in December, 1781, that he had a mild attack of inflammatory rheumatism but otherwise had no illness during the seven years of military service. In the Spring of 1782 he was busy again with smallpox inoculations, and by April 5 he had completed this aspect of his work. He then took a furlough, with his friend Eustis, back to his home in Barnstable. In the latter part of May he returned to the camp on the Hudson and there, except for a few trips around the country and one expedition to Philadelphia, he remained until he was mustered out of the service on January 1, 1783, and his diary ends at this point, with the following words:

"This day I close my military career, and quit forever the toils and vicissitudes incident to the storms of war. To my military companions I bid

a final adieu, and hope to enjoy in future the blessings which attend a virtuous course of domestic life. I retire with honorable testimonials, from very respectable authority, of my punctuality and faithful performance of duty in the various situations which I have been called to occupy, and with a heart fraught with grateful recollections of the kindness and affectionate intercourse which I have experienced from my superiors, and from my numerous companions and associates. While I congratulate my country on the momentous event by which we are about to be elevated to the rank of an Independent Nation, most cordially do I proffer my sympathy for the many lives of inestimable value which have been sacrificed during this ever memorable contest."

#### THE POST-WAR PERIOD

Home from the War in the summer of 1783, Thacher, then twenty-nine years of age, began to think of settling down to his practice, interrupted since the summer of 1775 when the young patriot of twenty-one hurried to Cambridge to join Washington's army lest the War end before he could become a surgeon's mate. Eight years and more was to pass before he could establish himself as a practitioner. The winter of 1783-1784 seems to have been a period of "terminal leave," filled in, no doubt, by a pleasant interlude of courting Susannah Hayward of Bridgewater, a town twenty-five miles to the northwest of Plymouth, whom he was to marry in 1785. One hopes, too, that he paid his respects to Abner Hersey, his eccentric teacher, still in practice in Barnstable. Hersey was to die a few years later at the age of sixty-five, an old man for his day, long worn out by his hard rounds, no doubt made none easier when his young, efficient apprentice left him after five years of training in the fateful July of 1775.

At all events, it was not until March, 1784, that Thacher, well qualified for his time by his good training and extensive war experience, left Barnstable and began his long period of practice in Plymouth. He was to remain for sixty years in the town he loved so well, forty of them as the leading physician of the county and the last twenty, when health partially failed, as a biographer, an antiquarian, farmer, horticulturist, and historian. From 1810 to 1835, nine books were written by Thacher, published in sixteen editions before his death in

1844, at the age of ninety. One book, the *Military Journal*, was reprinted, with change of title, at least seven times after his death. This was a prodigious output for a country doctor with a large practice. Much was made possible by his semi-retirement at the age of seventy on account of deafness in 1824, but his most important book, the *Military Journal*, was off the press in 1823, when Thacher was also not far from his period of greatest usefulness as a physician and surgeon.

Securely settled in 1784, Thacher married in April of the next year. Of his six children, only two survived him at his death. As his practice grew, young men came to him to learn the art of medicine.<sup>4</sup> They lived in his house as apprentices, but he was more than a master for he taught them medicine in a manner as good as and perhaps even superior to the regular instruction then available in qualified medical schools. Few local boys could afford to leave home for courses offered under John Warren and Benjamin Waterhouse in 1782 at the University at Cambridge, and even fewer could journey to Philadelphia to hear William Shippen and John Morgan, who had begun to teach in 1764. Thacher built his own "school" into his private practice, obtained his dissecting material from a neighboring church-yard, and assembled his own library of English authors, then the only texts available. He soon visualized the importance of books by American physicians and he was among the first in America to write books for the use of his students. In this endeavor he was most successful.

#### THE MEDICAL WRITINGS OF JAMES THACHER

The first years, from 1784 to 1804, were devoted almost entirely to building up a practice, for Thacher did not join the Massachusetts Medical Society until 1803, presumably too busy to take the long journey to Boston for the annual meeting. But he soon profited greatly by his membership, for the Society issued its *Pharmacopœia* in 1808, a book that completely changed the language of *materia medica* in this country. Thacher was quick to grasp the importance of the scholarly and safe contribution of John C. Warren and James Jackson, and he hastened to incorporate the essence of the Massachusetts Medical Society *Pharmacopœia* into his first publication, *The American New Dispensatory* (1810). The book, a standard work

written in familiar language in concentrated form, was immediately successful, and three additional editions were printed in the following eleven years. The current literature was fully scanned, augmented by the extensive correspondence Thacher must have carried on with physicians in other parts of the country.

Thacher soon discovered that there was no systematic treatise on practical medicine available to his American students other than the standard English textbooks of his times. For years he collected data, particularly on diseases most frequently encountered by him in practice. His *American Modern Practice*, first issued in 1817, placed before the students and practitioners of the country a comprehensive, practical book. His chapters on the "Duties of a Physician" is one of outstanding value in arrangement and full of sound advice. "To excel in the profession of medicine," wrote Thacher, "and to practice with success and reputation, requires indefatigability, industry, and a vast variety of liberal accomplishments, as well as an understanding improved by knowledge and experience." Surely no one better exemplified than Thacher "indefatigable industry," "liberal accomplishments," and "understanding improved by knowledge and experience."

A second edition, in 1826, expanded and finely printed, brought the subject up to date and the book was established as the outstanding contribution in its field. Not the least important was the introductory "Historical Sketch of Medical Sciences, and the Sources and Means of Medical Instruction in the United States," assembling all the material related to medical instruction in America up to the time of publication of each of the two editions. This chapter was not only useful at the time but it preserved for medical historians in future times a wealth of factual data and a complete review of medical education as practiced in the early years of the nineteenth century in this country.

In chronological order, between *The American New Dispensatory* (1810) and *American Modern Practice* (1817) came the slightest of Thacher's works, *Observations on Hydrocephalus*, issued in Plymouth in 1812. Two patients dying of this disease were seen by Thacher in 1810 and they form the starting point for the book. Their symptoms are well described. The book reflects, moreover, his wide reading, for its condenses most of

the pertinent literature of his day in a series of letters to a friend, leaving, as he writes, "no accessible sources uninvestigated." From the extensive quotations one must conclude that few members of the Massachusetts Medical Society used the library of that organization, established in 1782, more than this country practitioner in Plymouth, although he no doubt had many books in his personal library for the use of his students. Thacher's *Observations on Hydrophobia* serves to illustrate his method of writing. First comes an example of the disease in his practice, then he scans and abstracts all the literature he can find, and finally he puts this material in orderly arrangement and writes a practical book on the subject. In the case of hydrophobia he also suggested more stringent laws to restrain animals already affected.

#### HORTICULTURE

Coming from farming stock, Thacher never lost his interest in agricultural pursuits. To improve the country and encourage the farmer he wrote a short treatise on apple and other fruit trees, *The American Orchardist*, published in 1822. As on other subjects he read the literature thoroughly, adopting whatever he found in European publications for American needs. He devoted many of his leisure hours to horticulture, and much of the book reflects his own experiences, a form of recreation that to Thacher was a necessity, "Nothing can be more irksome to a reflecting mind," he wrote in the dedication to the officers of the Massachusetts Agricultural Society, "than a state of inactivity and idleness." Although *The American Orchardist* is largely a compilation of the opinions of others, the material is well arranged and the book is a practical guide for the culture and management of fruit trees.

Another publication deals in a similar manner with the care of bees. In this book, *A Practical Treatise on the Management of Bees*, (1829), Thacher gives many examples of his own observations, as well as those of his neighbors.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Thacher's name is best known to medical historians through his *American Medical Biography*, a book published in two volumes in 1828. Of particular value is the preface on the "History of Medicine in America," eighty-five pages of closely woven facts and the basis for all subsequent writings

on the subject. The biographies are a tribute to Thacher's erudition, a worthy product of his well-disciplined mind and productive antiquarianism.

Towards the end of his life Thacher wrote a brief history of the Salem witchcraft episode, *An Essay on Demonology, Ghosts, and Apparitions* (1831) and a *History of the Town of Plymouth* (1832). The latter passed into a second edition in 1835. Both are written in Thacher's best style, careful compilations of considerable value. To the history of Plymouth he added an important chapter on "The Aborigines or Indian Natives of New England."

#### SUMMARY

I have dealt largely with Thacher's *Military History* for it is his least known and, to me, his most important writing. The diary reflects his own observations and serves to illuminate the man as well as the times in which he lived. His experiences were not extraordinary, but what he saw he recorded and often commented upon. He, untrained and with a limited education, was a good reporter and his diary can be read with pleasure and profit as well in 1949 as it was in early years of the nineteenth century and throughout the years just prior to the War Between the States. Indeed, the book was so popular from 1854 to 1862 that seven editions were called for. Some printings were so read and used up that only single copies are now found to signify its wide popularity.

After the Revolution Thacher became a physician of more than ordinary distinction, a pioneer in medical education, a writer of note, a practitioner of sterling quality, and a molder of medical thought whose influence has grown with the years, as befits a medical worthy whose name should not be forgotten.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE PRINCIPAL WRITINGS OF JAMES THACHER

- (1) *The American new dispensatory. Containing general principles of pharmaceutic chemistry. Pharmaceutic operations. Chemical analysis of the articles of materia medica. Materia medica, including several new and valuable articles, the production of the United States. Preparations and compositions. With an appendix, containing medical prescriptions. The nature and medical uses of the gases. Medical electricity. Galvanism. An abridgement of Dr. Currie's reports on the use of water. The cultivation of the poppy plant, and the method of*

preparing opium. And several useful tables. The whole compiled from the most approved authors, both European and American. 4°. pp. 529.

Boston: Printed and Published by T. B. Wait and Co., 1810.

*Notes:* Dedicated To John Warren, M.D., Plymouth, January 1, 1810. The *Preface* is dated, Plymouth, January 1, 1810. The Report of a Committee of the Massachusetts Medical Society, consisting of John Warren, Aaron Dexter and Josiah Bartlett, is published as a *Recommendation*, dated Boston, October 14, 1809.

Thacher adopted as a basis for his work the "Pharmacopoeia of Massachusetts," issued by the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1808.

The text ends on p. 389; *Appendix* (pp. 391-457); *Tables* (pp. 459-493); *English and Latin Indexes* (pp. 495-529).

*Copyright:* May 10, 1810 (Mass.), by Thomas B. Wait and Company.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(1a) —————— 2 ed. 4°. pp. xxvii, [25]-732.

Boston: Published by Thomas B. Wait and Co., and C. Williams. T. B. Wait and Co., Printers, [1813].

*Notes:* There is a slight change in the title page. The *Preface to the Second Edition* is dated Plymouth, January 1, 1813. The text is considerably modified and the book is re-set. The text ends on p. 564; *Appendix* (pp. 565-651); *Tables and Glossary* (pp. 652-694); *English and Latin Indexes* (pp. 695-732).

*Copyright:* April 30, 1813 (Mass.) by Thomas B. Wait and Co.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(1b) —————— 3 ed. 4°. pp. 724.

Boston: Printed and Published by Thomas B. Wait and Sons, 1817.

*Notes:* The *Preface to the Third Edition* is dated, Plymouth, November 1, 1817. There are changes in the text and the book is re-set.

The text ends on p. 576; *Appendix* (pp. 577-659); *Tables* (pp. 660-690); *English and Latin Index* (pp. 691-724).

*Copyright:* October 30, 1817 (Mass.), by Thomas B. Wait and Sons.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(1c) —————— 4 ed. 4°. pp. 736.

Boston: Published by Thomas B. Wait. Joseph W. Ingraham, Printer, 1821.

*Notes:* The *Preface to the Fourth Edition* is dated, Plymouth, Mass., June 1, 1821. The author notes that parts of the book were printed, without acknowledgement, in another work. The text is changed and the book re-set. *Recommendations* from David Hosack, Lyman Spalding, Wright Post, Valentine Mott and others appear in the preliminary leaves.

The text ends on p. 605; *Appendix* (pp. 606-688);

*Tables* (pp. 689-718); *English and Latin Indexes* (pp. 719-736).

*Copyright:* October 9, 1821 (Mass.), by Thomas B. Wait.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(2) Observations on hydrophobia, produced by the bite of a mad dog, or other rabid animal. With an examination of the various theories and methods of cure, existing at the present day; and an inquiry into the merit of specific remedies. Also, a method of treatment best adapted to the brute creation. In a series of letters addressed to a friend. 4°. pp. (xii), (13)-(302). 1. pl.

Plymouth (Mass.): Published by Joseph Avery, 1812.

*Notes:* J. Belcher, Printer, Boston. The *Advertisement* is dated; Plymouth, January 1, 1812. The *plate*, showing a species of skull-cap, hand colored, follows p. 214. It is well produced on heavy paper. Some copies are bound in blue boards, uncut. The name of the friend to whom the letters are addressed is not disclosed. *Errata* (p. xii); *Postscript* (p. 302).

*Copyright:* March 25, 1812 (Mass.), by Joseph Avery.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(3) American modern practice; or, a simple method of prevention and cure of diseases, according to the latest improvements and discoveries, comprising a practical system adapted to the use of medical practitioners of the United States. To which is added an appendix, containing an account of many domestic remedies recently introduced into practice, and some approved formulae applicable to the diseases of our climate. 4°. pp. (2), iv, (3)-744.

Boston: Published by Ezra Read. C. Norris and Co., Printers, 1817.

*Notes:* The *Preface* is dated, Plymouth, Mass., January 1st, 1817. Introducing the text is an *Historical Sketch of Medical Science, and the Sources and Means of Medical Instruction in the United States*. (pp. 3-66).

The text begins on p. 67 and ends on p. 666; *Appendix* (pp. 667-731); *Errata* (p. 732); *Index* (pp. 733-744).

*Copyright:* December 30, 1816 (Mass.), by Ezra Read.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(3a) —————— A new ed., improved. 4°. pp. viii, 976.

Boston: Published by Cottons & Barnard. John Cotton, Printer, 1826.

*Notes:* The book is dedicated to David Hosack, M.D., Plymouth, May 10, 1826. The text is revised and re-set. Some copies are bound in boards, uncut, with paper or leather label on the back-strip.

The *Historical Sketch* is brought up to date to include the first few months of 1826 and late changes are added on p. 785.

The text ends on p. 748; *Appendix* (pp. 749-785); *Errata* (p. 786); *Index* (pp. 787-796).

*Copyright:* September 16, 1826 (Mass.), by Cottons and Barnard.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(4) The American orchardist; or a practical treatise on the culture and management of apple and other fruit trees, with observations on the diseases to which they are liable, and their remedies. To which is added the most approved method of manufacturing and preserving cider. Compiled from the latest and most approved authorities, and adapted to the use of American farmers. 4°. pp. [viii], [9]-226.

Boston: Printed and Published by Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822.

*Notes:* The book is dedicated *To the President and other officers of the Massachusetts Agricultural Society*, Plymouth, July, 1821. *Recommendation* by Aaron Dexter, M.D., and others. *Errata* (p. viii). *Index* (pp. 219-226). Boards; paper label.

*Copyright:* January 3, 1822 (Mass.), by Joseph W. Ingraham.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(4a) The American orchardist; or, A practical treatise on the culture and management of apple and other fruit trees, with observations on the diseases to which they are liable, and their remedies. To which is added the most approved method of manufacturing and preserving cider, and also wines from apple juice and currants. Adapted to the use of American farmers, and all lovers and cultivators of fine fruit. 2 ed., improved much. 4°. p. 236.

Plymouth, Mass.: Published by Ezra Collier, 1825.

*Notes:* The title is slightly changed in the second edition and the book is revised, re-set and printed by Allen Danforth in Plymouth. There is a new *Preface*, dated, Plymouth, October, 1825. *Index* (pp. 229-236).

*Copyright:* October 24, 1825 (Mass.), by Ezra Collier.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(5) A military journal during the American Revolutionary War, from 1775 to 1783, describing interesting events and transactions of this period, with numerous historical facts and anecdotes, from the original manuscript. To which is added an appendix, containing biographical sketches of several general officers. 4°. pp. viii, [9]-603.

Boston: Published by Richardson and Lord. J. H. A. Frost, printer, 1823.

*Notes:* The *Dedication* is to John Brooks, Governor of Massachusetts, dated, Plymouth, January 1st, 1823. The *Military Journal* (pp. 9-390) covers the period January, 1775 through December, 1782. Consideration of the events of 1783 is given in the *Revolutionary Annals* (pp. 391-434). The *Appendix* contains notes (pp. 435-484) and Biographical Sketches (pp. 485-593). *Contents* (pp. 595-603). No index.

*Copyright:* May 17, 1823 (Mass.), by Richardson and Lord.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(5a) —————— 2 ed., revised and corrected.  
4°. pp. viii, 11-487, 1 (advt.).

Boston: Published by Cottons & Barnard. John Cotton, printer, 1827.

*Notes:* The text is revised and re-set. The preliminary leaves contain a letter from John Adams, dated Quincy, 11th September, 1824, in praise of the book. *Military Journal* (pp. 11-316); *Revolutionary Annals* (pp. 317-345); *Appendix* (pp. 347-477); *Contents* (pp. 479-487); No index. The advertisement of Cottons and Barnard is on the last leaf. Some copies are in boards, uncut, with paper label on the back-strip. Some copies have attached label on title-page—London: R. J. Kennett, 59 Great Queen Street.

The best edition, corrected by the author and issued under his direction.

*Copyright:* March 10, 1827 (Mass.), by Cottons and Barnard.

*Copies:* MB, etc.

(5b) *Military Journal*, during the American Revolutionary War, from 1775 to 1783; describing the events and transactions of this period, with numerous historical facts and anecdotes. To which is added, an appendix, containing biographical sketches of several general officers. 8°. pp. 494, [5] (advt.) pls., ports.

Hartford: Silas Andrus & Son. 1854.

*Notes:* A cheap reprint of the 1823 edition, with poor plates and portraits. Foundry of Silas Andrus & Son, Hartford. W. C. Armstrong, Typographer. Steam press of W. S. Williams. The note on the foundry and steam press is inverted on the back of the titlepage. Single line around titlepage and text. *Military Journal* (pp. 7-326); *Revolutionary Annals* (pp. 327-356); *Appendix* (pp. 357-486); *Contents* (pp. 487-494). No index.

Bound in law leather. The backstrip is lettered: *American Revolution. Thacher.*

*Copyright:* None.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

(5c) Military journal of the American Revolution, from the commencement to the disbanding of the American Army; comprising a detailed account of the principal events and battles of the Revolution, with their exact dates, and a biographical sketch of the most prominent generals. To which is added the life of Washington, his Farewell Address, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. 8°. pp. xiv, [7]-618. 8 colored pls., 24 ports., frontispiece and 4 engraved pls.

Hartford, Conn.: Published by subscription only by Hurlbut, Williams & Company, American Subscription Publishing House, 1862.

*Notes:* An expanded edition, re-set and printed by Williams, Wiley and Turner. R. H. Hobbs, stereotyper. The text of the 1823 edition is used. The plates are superior to those in the 1854 edition. *Preface* (pp. v-vi); *Contents* (pp. vii-xiv); *Military Journal* (pp. 7-326); *Revolutionary Annals* (pp. 327-356); *Appendix* (pp. 357-486); *Washington* (pp. 487-515); *Fare-*

*well Address* (pp. 516-526); *Declaration* (pp. 527-609); *Constitution* (pp. 610-618). No index.

Bound in purple cloth, with elaborate gold stamp. The backstrip is lettered: *Thacher's American Revolution*, without dates.

*Copyright*: 1861 (Conn.), by Hurlbut, Williams & Co.  
*Copies*: MBM, etc.

(5d) The American revolution, from the commencement to the disbanding of the American army; given in the form of a daily journal, with the exact dates of all the important events; also, a biographical sketch of all the most prominent generals. Published by subscription only. 8°. pp. xiv, 7-486. 7 colored pls., 24 ports.

Cincinnati: Published by Mack R. Barnitz, No. 40, West Fourth Street, [1856].

*Notes*: A reprinting of the text of the 1823 edition. The text-plates of the Hartford, 1854, edition are used, with added signature numbers and with a double line around text and titlepage. The Foundry and Press are not indicated. The *Dedication* and *Introduction* of the 1823 edition are omitted and a new *Preface* substituted. The *Contents* is retained and precedes the text. The portraits and hand-colored plates differ from the preceding editions.

Bound in green cloth, with elaborate gold stamp. The backstrip is lettered: *Thacher's American Revolution from 1775 to 1783*.

*Copyright*: 1856 (Ohio), by Mack R. Barnitz.  
*Copies*: DLC (only copy found).

(5e) —————— 8°. pp. xiv, 7-486. 7 colored pls., 24 ports.

Cincinnati: Published by Mack R. Barnitz, No. 40, West Fourth Street, [1857].

*Notes*: A re-issue of the [1856] edition, with same titlepage, but with change in copyright.<sup>6</sup>

*Copyright*: 1857 (Conn.), by L. St: bbins.  
*Copies*: NN (only copy found).

(5f) —————— 8°. pp. xiv, 7-486. 7 colored pls., 24 ports.

Cincinnati, Ohio: Published by Mack R. Barnitz, 38 and 40 West Fourth Street, 1859.

*Notes*: A re-issue of the [1856] edition, with dated titlepage. Steam press Williams and Wiley.

*Copyright*: 1856 (Ohio), by Mack R. Barnitz.  
*Copies*: M, MBM, MiU, Viets.

(5g) —————— 8°. p. 486. 7 colored pls., 24 ports., frontispiece.

New York: American Subscription Publishing House, 1860.

*Notes*: A re-issue of the [1856] edition, with dated titlepage and engraved frontispiece. R. H. Hobbs, Stereotyper. Williams and Wiley, printers.

*Copyright*: 1859 (Conn.), by Lucius Stebbins.  
*Copies*: ICN, MH, NNN, CtY-M, RPB.

(5h) —————— 8°. pp. xiv, 7-486. 8 colored pls., 24 ports., frontispiece.

Hartford, Conn.: Hurlbut, Kellogg, & Co., American Subscription Publishing House, 1861.

*Notes*: A re-issue of the [1856] edition, with dated titlepage and engraved frontispiece. R. H. Hobbs, Stereotyper. Williams and Wiley, printers. A new colored plate is added to the 7 found in previous editions.

*Copyright*: 1860 (Conn.), by Hurlbut, Kellogg, & Co.  
*Copies*: Ct, DLC, ICHi, MWA, MWHi, N, NNC, OC, OCIWHi, PP.

(6) American medical biography: memoirs of eminent physicians who have flourished in America. To which is prefixed a succinct history of medical science in the United States, from the first settlement of the country. 2 vols. in 1. 4°. pp. 436; 280. ports.

Boston: Richardson & Lord and Cottons & Barnard, 1828.

*Notes*: The book is dedicated to Edward Augustus Holyoke, M.D., dated Plymouth, Mass., January 1, 1828. The *Preface* carries the same date. The *History of Medicine* (pp. 9-85) is an expanded version of the *Historical Sketch of Medical Science*, first published in "American modern practice," 1817 and enlarged in the second edition of 1826. This account contains further revisions. The book is well printed and the lithographed portraits excellent. Copies in boards, uncut, with paper label on the backstrip are known.

*Copyright*: February 13, 1828 (Mass.) by Richardson & Lord and Cottons & Barnard.

*Copies*: MBM, etc.

(7) A practical treatise on the management of bees; and the establishment of apiaries, with the best method of destroying and preventing the depredations of the bee moth. 6°. pp. 162 [4].

Boston: Marsh & Capen. Press of Dow and Niles, 1829.

*Notes*: The *Advertisement* is dated, Plymouth, November 1828. The *Appendix* (pp. 127-149) is taken from an article by Mrs. Mary Griffith, of New Brunswick, N. J.; *Postscript* (pp. 150-152); *Analytical Index* (pp. 153-162); *Contents* (p. 163); *Errata* (p. 164). The advertisement of Marsh & Capen is on pp. 165-166; Thacher's "American Orchardist" is offered for \$1.00.

*Copyright*: December 30, 1828 (Mass.), by Marsh & Capen.

*Copies*: MBM, etc.

(8) An essay on demonology, ghosts and apparitions, and popular superstitions. Also, an account of the witchcraft delusion at Salem, in 1692. 6°. pp. vi, 234.

Boston: Carter and Hendee, MDCCCXXXI.

*Notes*: Printed by Boston Classic Press. I. R. Butts. The *Advertisement* (pp. iii-iv) is dated, Plymouth, Nov. 1831. *Salem witchcraft* (pp. 113-204); *Medical Quackery* (pp. 225-234). Binding: red buckram; paper label.

*Copyright*: 1831 (Mass.), by Carter and Hendee.  
*Copies*: MBM, etc.

(9) History of the town of Plymouth; from its first settlement in 1620, to the year 1832. 6°. p. 382. pl., map.  
Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon, 1932.

*Notes:* Waitt and Dow's Press. The *Preface* is dated Plymouth, July 4, 1832. *Frontispiece*, New Church; *Index* (pp. v-xi); *Errata* (p. xii). The text begins on p. 13. Bound in purple cloth.

As noted in the *Preface* to the second edition (1835), the whole of this edition, consisting of 1250 copies, was disposed of within a few months after publication.

*Copyright:* 1832 (Mass.), by Marsh, Capen, and Lyon.

*Copies:* MH, etc.

(9a) History of the town of Plymouth, from its first settlement in 1620, to the present time: with a concise history of the aborigines of New England, and their wars with the English, &c. 2 ed., enlarged and corrected. 6°. pp. 401. fold. map.

Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon, 1835.

*Notes:* The book is revised and re-set. The *Preface* is dated, Plymouth, Sept. 1st, 1835. *The aborigines or Indian natives of New England* occurs on pp. 353-401. The *Contents* (pp. [v]-15) serve as an index. In this edition the map is redrawn and improved. The frontispiece is omitted.

*Copyright:* 1835 (Mass.), by Marsh, Capen & Lyon.

*Copies:* MBM, etc.

#### ABBREVIATIONS FOR LIBRARIES

Ct.	Connecticut State Library, Hartford.
CtY-M.	Yale University, New Haven. Medical School.
DLC.	Library of Congress.
ICN.	Newberry Library, Chicago.
ICHi.	Chicago Historical Society.
M.	Massachusetts State Library, Boston.
MB.	Boston Public Library.
MBM.	Boston Medical Library.
MH.	Harvard University, Cambridge.
MWA.	American Antiquarian Society, Worcester.
MWHi.	Worcester Historical Society.
MiU.	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
N.	New York State Library, Albany.
NN.	New York Public Library.
NNC.	Columbia University, New York.
NNN.	New York Academy of Medicine.
OC.	Cincinnati Public Library.
OCHiWhi.	Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland.
PP.	Free Library, Philadelphia.
RPB.	Brown University, Providence.

#### ORDER OF THACHER PUBLICATIONS

1. The American new dispensatory. Boston, 1810.
- 1.a. ————— 2 ed. Boston, [1813].
- 1.b. ————— 3 ed. Boston, 1817.
- 1.c. ————— 4 ed. Boston, 1821.
2. Observations on hydrophobia. Plymouth, 1812.
3. American modern practice. Boston, 1817.
- 3.a. ————— 2 ed. Boston, 1826.
4. The American Orchardist. Boston, 1822.

4.a. —————	new ed.	Plymouth, 1825.
5. A military journal.	Boston, 1823.	Boston, 1823.
5.a. —————	2 ed.	Boston, 1827.
5.b. Military journal.	Hartford, 1854.	Hartford, 1854.
5.c. —————	Hartford, 1862.	Hartford, 1862.
5.d. The American revolution.	Cincinnati, [1856].	Cincinnati, [1857].
5.e. —————	Cincinnati, 1859.	Cincinnati, 1859.
5.f. —————	New York, 1860.	New York, 1860.
5.g. —————	Hartford, 1861.	Hartford, 1861.
5.h. —————	Boston, 1828.	Boston, 1828.
6. American medical biography. 2 vols.	Boston, 1829.	Boston, 1829.
7. A Practical Treatise on . . . bees.	Boston, 1831.	Boston, 1831.
8. An essay on demonology.	Boston, 1832.	Boston, 1832.
9. History of the town of Plymouth.	Boston, 1835.	Boston, 1835.
9.a. —————	2 ed.	

#### REFERENCES

1. The manuscript of the original diary has not, so far as known, been preserved. First published in 1823, forty years after the close of the War in 1783, the text may have been rewritten and considerably modified by the author in the intervening years. The diary, however, has the freshness of an original document in spite of its late publication. The second, and best edition, revised by Thacher, was issued in 1827. There were many subsequent editions based on the text of the first, 1823, printing. Thacher was a mature man, sixty-nine years of age, when the *Journal* was first published.

2. All references refer to the second edition of *A Military Surgeon*, Boston, 1827.

3. The spelling of Skeensbury has been left as Thacher wrote it. He later referred to the place of rendezvous as Skeenesborough. It is now known as Whitehall, a name adopted in 1786.

4. Noted in a biography of Thacher, in manuscript, by his daughter, Betsy Hayward Thacher (1786-1871), now in the Boston Medical Library. She wrote: "Being so well qualified as an instructor in medicine my Father has educated more young gentlemen in the medical profession than all the other physicians in the old colony. They are scattered through the United States and many of them are ornaments to the profession."

5. There is no full-length biography of Thacher. The most extensive sketch of his life will be found in the *Dictionary of American Biography* (1936). Many letters, as yet unedited, are in the Boston Medical Library.

6. In the catalogue of the F. S. Hoffman Sale, held on March 19, 1877, in New York, an edition of the *American Revolution*, New York, 1857, was offered as item #4701. No such edition has been located or any other reference to it, except in Sabin (95148), where the Hoffman copy is noted, without further assignment. This might be the "third edition of which I find is to be published by the Harpers of New York, revised by his grandson, Mr. James F. Hodge" of New York. (S. W. Williams *American Medical Biography*. Greenfield, Mass. 1845. p. 567).



